

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY NEA/ARN:MDRAPER:PDW

APPROVED BY NEA:ALATHERTON, JR.

P:POAKLEY

S/S:LMACFARLANE

S:RAHERNE

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

SECRET STATE 229268 TOSEC 270203

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, US, SA

SUBJECT: ACTION MEMORANDUM: BRIEFING THE SAUDIS ON

LEBANESE DEVELOPMENTS (S/S NO.7619507)

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM NEA/ATHERTON

1. THE SAUDIS HAVE REMINDED US THAT THEY WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING ANY INFORMATION WE WOULD CARE TO PROVIDE ABOUT THE RECENT HOUGHTON/MACK VISIT TO CHRISTIAN-CONTROLLED LEBANON.

2. RECOMMENDATION: THAT YOU APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CABLE TO EMBASSY JIDDA.

3. PROPOSED CABLE TO JIDDA:

ACTION ADDRESSEE: JIDDA IMMEDIATE

NODIS, FOR CHARGE FROM THE SECRETARY

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SUBJECT: LEBANESE DEVELOPMENTS

YOU SHOULD IN ABSENCE OF FOREIGN MINISTER SEEK MEETING WITH APPROPRIATE SENIOR FONMIN OFFICIAL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO SHARE THE FOLLOWING IMPRESSIONS WE HAVE GAINED OF THE CHRISTIAN POSITION IN LEBANON THROUGH THE RECENT VISITS TO CHRISTIAN-CONTROLLED TERRITORY BY FSO'S HOUGHTON AND MACK. IN SO DOING, YOU SHOULD STRESS SENSITIVITY OF THIS INFO, AND REQUEST IT BE MADE AVAILABLE ONLY TO MOST SENIOR SAUDI LEADERS.

AS REGARDS THE HOUGHTON/MACK VISIT, YOU MAY DRAW ON THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

-- THE CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP IS GENERALLY CONFIDENT, AND SHOWED LITTLE CONCERN ABOUT THEIR CAPACITIES TO DEFEND THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY. THEIR OVERWHELMING PREOCCUPATION, HOWEVER, IS THE PRESENT AND FUTURE ROLE OF THE PALESTINIANS RESIDING IN LEBANON. THE CHRISTIANS REMAIN UNWILLING TO RETURN TO THE STATUS QUO ANTE AS REGARDS THE PALESTINIAN ROLE IN THE LEBANESE STATE; THEY ARE OPPOSED TO LEAVING THE PALESTINIANS IN A POSITION TO RETAIN THE STATE-WITHIN-A-STATE STATUS OF THE PRE-WAR PERIOD OR TO PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN INTERNAL LEBANESE POLITICAL PROCESSES.

-- THE CHRISTIANS HAVE NOT MADE CLEAR HOW THEY INTEND TO ACHIEVE THEIR OBJECTIVE. THE PHALANGE AND SARKIS SEEM TO BE THE LEADING PROPONENTS OF AN EARLY CEASEFIRE WHICH WOULD ENABLE PEACE SETTLEMENT EFFORTS TO BE CONDUCTED IN A MORE PROPITIOUS ATMOSPHERE. THE PHALANGE IN PARTICULAR TELLS US IT INTENDS TO CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TO PROBE THE PALESTINIANS FOR AT LEAST A LIMITED UNDERSTANDING. EVEN FOR THE PHALANGE, HOWEVER, PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM THE METN SEEMS TO BE AN IRREDUCIBLE MINIMAL CONCESSION. EVEN THE CHRISTIANS WHO WANT A CEASEFIRE NOW ARE CONCERNED THAT THE EXTREMISTS AMONG THE PALESTINIANS WILL ULTIMATELY REJECT ANY UNDERSTANDING DEVELOPED WITH THE CHRISTIANS.

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-- THE CHRISTIAN LEADERS GENERALLY FAVOR A RESOLUTION OF THE LEBANESE-PALESTINIAN ASPECT OF THE CONFLICT PRIOR TO A RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE VARIOUS LEBANESE FACTIONS. THEY APPEAR CONFIDENT THAT THE PURELY LEBANESE ASPECTS OF THE CONFLICT ARE SUSCEPTIBLE TO SOLUTION. HERE AGAIN, SARKIS AND TO SOME EXTENT GEMAYEL ARE PREPARED TO OFFER MORE FAR-REACHING POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REFORMS

OR CONCESSIONS THAN CHAMOUN AND FRANGIE.

-- THE CHRISTIANS ARE GRATEFUL FOR SYRIAN HELP. SARKIS SAID HE WAS DETERMINED TO WORK WITH THE SYRIANS FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. SARKIS EXPLICITLY ASKED THAT THE U.S. DO EVERYTHING IT COULD TO HELP ENSURE THAT THERE WILL BE A CENTRAL AUTHORITY ON SEPTEMBER 23. WE PRESUME HE MEANT BY THIS A CEASEFIRE OR A SITUATION THAT WOULD PERMIT THE VARIOUS LEBANESE FACTIONS TO ACCEPT HIM AS THE PIVOT AROUND WHICH THE COUNTRY COULD BE REUNITED.

-- IT IS AN ACCEPTED FACT AMONG ALL THAT SARKIS WILL TAKE OVER AS PRESIDENT ON SEPTEMBER 23.

-- THE CHRISTIAN LEADERS GENERALLY ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE SUPPORT IN MATERIAL AND MEN BEING SUPPLIED FROM ABROAD, FROM THE SOVIETS, IRAQ AND LIBYA.

-- SOME OF THE CHRISTIAN LEADERS ASKED FOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT, AND WE EXPLAINED OUR POSITION THAT WE WILL CONTINUE OUR POLICY OF NOT SUPPLYING WEAPONS TO EITHER SIDE, NOR PERMITTING COMMERCIAL SALES, BUT THAT THE U.S. WILL BE PREPARED TO PLAY ITS PART IN HELPING EQUIP A NATIONAL FORCE AFTER THE CONFLICT IS CONCLUDED.

-- OUR ENVOYS MADE CLEAR THAT WE CONTINUED TO SUPPORT A SOLUTION THAT WOULD PRESERVE THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, INDEPENDENCE, NATIONAL UNITY AND COHESION OF LEBANON. WE SAID THAT WE WERE PREPARED TO SUPPORT EFFORTS TO SEEK A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT ON THE BASIS OF THE JANUARY-FEBRUARY PRINCIPLES AND WITH A RESTRICTED ROLE FOR THE PALESTINIANS. WE SAID WE HAD CONSISTENTLY SUPPORTED SYRIAN EFFORTS TO

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BRING ABOUT A POLITICAL SOLUTION, AND WE WOULD BE WILLING TO BACK MOVES IN LEBANON TO BRING THE FIGHTING TO AN END AND NEGOTIATE A SETTLEMENT.

-- WE TOLD THE CHRISTIANS THAT WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO SEND BACK FROM TIME TO TIME REPRESENTATIVES TO TALK TO THE CHRISTIAN LEADERS UNTIL SUCH TIME AS SECURITY CONDITIONS MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR OUR EMBASSY IN WEST BEIRUT TO RE-ESTABLISH NORMAL CONTACTS. WE TOLD SARKIS THAT WE WOULD BE PLEASED TO RECEIVE IN WASHINGTON A PERSONAL ENVOY FROM HIM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER HIS INAUGURATION.

AFTER GOING OVER THE FOREGOING POINTS, YOU SHOULD SAY THAT WE WOULD WELCOME SAG'S ASSESSMENT OF THE EVOLVING SITUATION. YOU SHOULD STATE WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT SARKIS, HAVING BEEN

ELECTED WITH THE SUPPORT OF BOTH MOSLEM AND CHRISTIAN
LEBANESE, WILL BE ABLE TO ACT AS A FORCE FOR UNITY AND
POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION AFTER HIS INAUGURATION AS PRESIDENT.
END PROPOSED CABLE TO JIDDA.

4. DRAFTED BY NEA/ARN:MDRAPER. APPROVED: NEA:ALATHERTON,
JR. CLEARED BY P:POAKLEY;
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